



Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians
Wk. 18 The Answer for Sexual Immorality - Marriage
By Pastor Jody May 08/24/2025

1 Corinthians 1:25 - For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Uncommon Sense - *"God's Wisdom over man's pride through a Flawed Church."*

[CALL TO HEAR]

1 Corinthians 7:1-9 ESV

Principles for Marriage

7 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." ²But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

⁶Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. ⁷I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

⁸To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."

People - "Thanks be to God."

Pray

Illustration

As a kid I learned a hard lesson of what it does to others when you don't sacrifice for them (story of a 3rd grade volleyball game).



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As for when it comes to marriage it works the same way, be careful in what you claim as your right, to have something your way, for it is not always the beneficial nor is it rarely the best choice. Choices in marriage based out of selfishness almost never work out the way you want them to.

Paul is writing to us in a matter that seems personal this morning, but the truth is there is no part of our lives families that is unto itself away from God's provision, correction, direction, knowledge, and reign. Even the bedroom life of the Christian belongs to God, is for God, and the behavior that happens behind closed doors models His goodness. Therefore, Paul has every right to speak into this private life of the Christian for the Corinthian Church, even those that were trying to remain away from sexual promiscuity, were still by their actions, doing things that would lead to sexual immorality. In a way you can say that they were trying to correct a problem by overcorrection. Paul's concern is that overcorrection in this case ignores the blessings of marriage, and the fruit of the Gospel which is sacrificing for one another. This needs to be addressed with clarity and straightforwardness.

Introduction

7:1 "Concerning the matters about which you wrote:" We are discovering here that Paul is not only addressing things that have been reported to him but that he has a written letter that he is answering questions from. Most likely the people he mentions in 16:17 brought it to him - Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus.

There are four things that he answers from the letter. The first one here is on the topic of marriage. It seems since he has been talking about sex and will do a little more, that this was a good place to drop this topic. Later in Chapters 8-10 he will talk about idols, and in Chapter 11 he will cover two other questions of head coverings and the Lord's Supper. Like a good Fatherly figure what he does for the Corinthians is not just answer questions specifically like chat GPT, he is resetting their belief systems. That is why four questions take him 15 chapters to fix. Dads in the room never just answer questions but tell your youngins why you make decisions the way you



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do. **That is you working out theology in front of your kids!** That's good use of your time even when they roll their eyes! 😊

What is the topic that he is speaking into?

"It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman"- (7:1). Now from the standpoint that we came from last week you would say Amen, PJ, that is right! Our main point last week was *Committing to Holy Living means fleeing from Sexual Immorality*, and if this saying was pertaining to last week's topic, then yes it fits. But we know that not to be the case because this phrase is sandwiched between, texts about not sleeping with people outside of marriage and texts that talk about not sleeping with people in the marriage.

That leads us to believe there was a saying developed in the church, that has gone viral, (just like last week "all things are lawful") but was causing some problems in the church, and it was this saying, **sex with a woman is bad!** Folks that is not the type of church, based on the number of kids reflected here at HCC, that all of us want no part of! It seems that some in the Corinthian church have overcorrected, and in light of the promiscuous culture in Corinth, were trying to start a cult based on **no sexual relations at all**, even in marriage.

So, what Paul wants to do is preserve the sanctity of marriage, while embracing all the different views of marriage that were held in Corinth at that time. In other words, Paul is trying to preserve **the most stabilizing of all factors in the life of the church, THE FAMILY**, and he was going to do it by elevating the bedroom in the right light for the right reasons.

You see there were 4 different types of marriages at this time in Corinth.¹ **In Manum** - means there will be a conferring of all the female's possessions to the husband's family. There were three types of these:

- **Usus** - common law marriage where the woman came under the husband's manum after a year of cohabitation. Doesn't mean necessarily sex but a female could live with the husband's parents for a year, and this would necessitate the union.

¹ <https://www.thoughtco.com/matrimonium-roman-marriage-119728>



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- **Coemptio** – where the wife carried a dowry into the marriage, so this is a marriage that was purchased, paying the husband in money or goods for the union. It perhaps was used for elevation in title or citizen rights, but still legal.
- **Confarreatio** – which was the public display of two becoming one. This is where Christians got their wedding ceremony from. Everything from maidens, groomsmen, a cake, rings, a religious officiant, and a day-long formal ceremony. It displayed that love was involved in this union and both sides desired it.
- **Contubernium** – This was the joining by a slave master among his slaves, to recognize their unions, as long as it suited everyone, you could carry on as married couples. If it became a problem the master had the right to dissolve the union or if he desired to sell one party, he may do that as well.

Paul is now faced with a multi-tiered dilemma. Some marriages as in the case for **Usus** or **Coemptio** could be looking forward to consummation and now that was being threatened by this false doctrine, so that marriage would lack the engagement that was meant to bind on the psycho-emotional level. For the **Confarreatio** marriages, what helped to keep them solid was now being threatened to be dissolved. Lastly, for his biggest audience perhaps, the slave populace in the church, was surrendering what God put together in the act of **Contubernium**. What was very beneficial for raising children when you did have much by way of monetary means. This means Paul must do the hard work of clarifying what Fleeing from Sexual Immorality means, so this week here's how we captured the intent of this passage.

MP:

Flee from Sexual Immorality
by getting God's intent for marriage right.

That for those already married, the answer to steer clear from sexual immorality is not to refrain from relations with one's spouse but to run into their arms! By doing so we prevent the boiling over, if you will, of sexual tensions, where both sides might not feel the same about the refraining from sex. There are three things that Paul leaves us today with as good things.



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First, be married for it is a good thing. That is being married does not contribute to immorality, but it keeps us from being immoral. **Second, be gracious in marriage for your body is not your own.** That is when you are married, when the two become one, personal ownership of oneself goes out the window. You have been bought with a price and given by the Lord to another for the working out of sanctification, and the bedroom life is a vital part of that. **Lastly, determine to be married or single based on God's bidding.** That means whatever you decide to do, do it for the right reason, to live for God and bring Him glory, so check your motives.

1. Be married for it is a good thing.

7 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." ² But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Alright Paul wants to tackle this false assumption that has entered the Corinthian church, and he is going to talk about the most obvious of reasons, that is if you have a pulse and are alive. The reason you don't want to forsake the wedding bed, choosing a life of celibacy, when you are already married, is because that is how you fight the temptation against sexual immorality. The phrase, "**But because of the temptation**", straight up says this is why! The Greek word there for SI is **fornicate**, making the meaning broader than just adultery, it is literally any sexual deviant behavior.

In the same way it is ok to interpret this verse this way. If you are not married right now, but you deal with the fact that you are attracted to the opposite sex, then yes, the solution for you most likely lies in getting married. It also means that for those that are sometimes confused about sexuality or even have experienced from time-to-time same sex attraction, **the answer is not to remain unmarried** but to get married and experience love, commitment, and the bedroom in the way God intended. (FYI all sin is fought by engaging with acts of obedience to what God has called us into, not running away from challenges).



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In both cases God wants to use the blessing of marriage to correct and mold the marriage through God's intended union. Friends even for those out there that think they are normal, that you have no hidden deviance in you, the bedroom teaches you something different. **It makes you aware that sex is not about getting your needs met but it is about filling the needs of another.** There is a blessing in this lesson, you will gain more joy out of your marriage, watching the relationship strengthen when you discover that there is **something you can do for your spouse that no one else can do!**

That means the bedroom for all people is the place where sanctification makes leaps and bounds because it allows you to practice in real time, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them". The Golden Rule **Matthew 7:12**. Dying to oneself, learning how to do that well, for most people, begins in the marriage relationship, and we need to **thank God that He has given us the blessing of marriage to learn that, instead of giving us the lesson His Son had to learn; self-denial ending in a cross.** Folks, sex is a very real blessing of marriage, but it is so much more than just about fun, it is a God given sanctifying work given to help conform you into the image of Jesus through play and enjoyment!

The second thing this verse points out for us, and again it is obvious, but it means it is worth saying, marriage is only meant for two. "**each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.**" Each man and woman is only to marry 'one' person of the opposite sex. Alright that means '**Polygamy**' is a big 'NO'. Yes, you see it in scripture (OT), but it is not a common practice, many times it happens with slaves and concubines for provisional or political purposes, but it is not the command of scripture.

As a matter of fact, Jesus reemphasized the proper marriage of one man to one woman and taught that even if you divorced her, it was still considered adultery, meaning you only got room for one spouse in your life at a time ([Mat. 5:31-32](#)). Not to mention, and the Bible is very clear about portraying this, the more wives someone had the more problems they had; the more bickering that took place, the more the offspring warred with each other and vied for dominance, and the more the men were led astray to sin and not follow God.



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Needless to say, one of the things that points to a false religion is the act of polygamy. So, the ones we know of that are mainstream like Islam, Mormonism, and Sikhism (Indian culture and the practice of the Maharajas) they are pursuing something that goes against biblical teaching. These cults suffer then from the strain of the influence of multiple depraved wives driving their husbands deeper into false doctrine.

You see God's blessed union of Genesis 2, ***24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*** where they become one, is to be united in their pursuit of God together. God has built for us men a helper, thank Him for that men, and ladies, He gave you a leader/provider, thank God for that!

Let's be reminded being married is a good thing! It teaches us how to love through the blessing of the bedroom, how to love sacrificially, and it is great place to practice sanctification. It also steers us away from our deviancy, allowing us to fall deeper in love with the only person that can love us fully in this world. This is how we the church practice fleeing sexual immorality, with a first things first approach, we understand God gave us marriage and it was very good!

Now seeing that it is a good thing, let's see what Paul says specifically to the situation here going on in Corinth.

2. Be gracious in marriage for your body is not your own.

³The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Now Paul is going to build the case as to why there should be no silliness like, ***"It is not good for a man to touch a woman business,"*** (v.1) besides the obvious answer of weakening marriages, weakening the sanctity of the union, and



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weakening the family as unit in the church, there is a command of God that must be followed.

This command from Genesis (2:24-25), that they **hold fast to each other**, (24) btw that means with force right, with no intent of letting go (picture of Indian Jones and Marion Ravenwood). That means **from day one, the idea of divorce was never given**. But then it says, **and they shall become one flesh**, and we talked about that some last week right. That means the two give up on two sets of objectives, goals, desires, they are to be of one mind. When the two hold onto each other it is first a command of the Lord, that did not come from the desire of man first. Did you all hear me this morning? Even when Adam was joined with the perfect wife Eve, God STILL gave the command to hold fast first. It didn't matter if Eve made it easy or not, it is God's will for the union. BTW God gave that command in light of **His foreknowledge** before the fall that **He ordained would happen**. Our being fallen does not change the command to hold fast.

Now we have two holding fast, because they are one and that means when joined, now here comes the fine print. Certain rights have been surrendered and promised upon the union. The right to withhold from the other that which strengthens the union, that which only the other person can provide, because no one else in the world should satiate sexual desires but the spouse remember, keeping to God's Laws for Holiness and forgoing a binding with another - When the two are **married that is your command to give that special gift to your spouse and your right to expect that to be reciprocated**. In other words, it is **not your right to withhold sex from your spouse because your body is no longer just yours**. It belongs to the other, as ordained by God, when oaths were given in His name, during a ceremony with God as your witness.

NOW of course folks that doesn't mean to abuse your spouse with that, to be demanding all the time, or to take without consent. All of that goes against the principle of loving each other as Christ loved us. Christ never takes our love without our consent, but He does demand it, that's His right. In the same way wives and husbands yes, you may call on the other for your right for love, that is under your authority, but if you find yourself asking *all the time* and it never being offered, let me ask you how are you doing at providing intimacy, trust,



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agreeability, play, and friendship outside the bedroom that makes each individual desirable? All of that is required in the marriage by the way. I usually find that where one is demanding all the time while the other is unwilling most the time it is usually due to a lack of connection, not a lack of wanting to comply.

Ok so when is it ok not to copulate, Paul does give a reason.

⁵Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

It is by **mutual determination based on spiritual need**. That means when one needs a timeout from the demands of the bedroom the other one should be right there to listen and ascertain the needs of the other. If someone's heart is not in it, usually, and you all know this, **it is from stress in this world**. If that's the case, and the things that God gives to take away stress is so far from your mind, then the knowledge that your spouse is praying with you, for you, and right beside you, tends to make the worries of the world go away. **You know what builds intimacy, bearing one another's burden to God on behalf of the other**. Sometimes Romance begins by you demonstrating to your spouse that you aren't after their body but that you are after their soul being with you in eternity.

Wherever you are in this family let me remind you be gracious to your partner, that is do for them not because they deserve it, not because they acted like you wanted them to, not as a reward for good behavior, that is not your right to manipulate your spouse! No, be gracious, and give to your spouse the good gift that only you can give for it models Christ who gives to us a gift that we did not deserve, that while we were sinners Christ died for us. Listen Paul's final admonition on this is that this is exactly **where Satan zeros in** on in tempting you! Let us not give Him this ground!

By getting God's intent right for marriage in this area, being gracious and not withholding ourselves, we are helping ourselves as couples flee sexual immorality.



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3. Determine to be married or single to do God's bidding.

⁶Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. ⁷I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

Now in everything we just talked about, let me be clear on this point. I have not said, nor will I say that it is God's will for everyone to be married. It is neither God's will for all those who want to be married to get married either. But what Paul is saying is that sometime the **demands of life, which is our ministry**, does not allow for it, or does not give a desire for it, and would be selfish if you had to split time between ministry and another. Paul by his admission, is saying this is not a command what he is saying here, but hey when you are single you get to serve the Jesus/Church. You get live in such a way without having to worry about the person that has the right to pull you away from that service.

It is a gift if you don't need to be married in order to avoid immorality. But Paul is not saying either, that getting married is only for sexual enjoyment. That would go against the cultural mandate genesis 1:28 & 9:1 of **being fruitful and multiple**. God wants to make followers and His number one way of doing that is through the procreation process. He's merely pointing out to the Corinthians you're right I am not married, and he wishes others didn't have this battle over immorality, or a thing that drew them away from ministry.

BTW some scholars I read this week, wanted me to point this out to you. Because Paul is not married at this time of his writing Corinthians does not mean he never was married. Being a God-honoring, young Jewish man going places under the famous teacher Gaius, being called the Jew of Jews, and having connection to if not already in the Sanhedrin, he most almost assuredly would have been married. Single Jewish men in the high life of Jewish culture were married and were married young. This has led some to believe he is already a widow, or even that he was divorced if she, being a good Jew and from good family, did not want to leave that behind for Paul. Point is that Paul is probably not talking about stuff he has no knowledge of, don't assume that automatically.



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⁸To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Again, as we round out our time Paul makes mention about a certain group of people, the widows. The widows in the church would had have developed into a unique group of people in the church. The Christian church provided for widows, and that could mean men too, a place where they did not need a man to be provided for. They had security in the body of the church and through that connection they were able to serve the church in a number of different capacities. He sees the need for their service, perhaps even keeping their children out of the clutches of pagan influences, but Paul in 1 Timothy 5:13 tells Timothy they are not to be running around being busybodies and gossips, in that case go get married. **The point is, even though they have belonged to another person at one time in their life it was ok to make that connection again, marriage is still a good thing and if you get it twice in life it is a Grace of God.**

So, the final warning again to drive this point home, *it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

When you have counted the cost, when you have looked into your future, when you ask yourself, the question **do I see myself as the person that has desires**, then be ok to accept that call for your life. Young person/single person, add that to your prayer life, it's ok. The Lord has made you with the desires you have, they **aren't a part of the fallen world**, that feeling to want to experience that closeness with someone comes from before the fall, it was the intent from the garden, and it is the call for most people. Trust God though with your futures. Don't rush the process, don't skimp on that which makes for a good mate.

Start with that which is most important, someone who loves Jesus and wants to be one with Him first. Start with that person that is going to stay with you even when things don't go the way they wanted, because they honor that commitment with God first (that is shown through a committed church



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/family life). You start with the person that sees children as a future and embraces making homes where God is honored in word and deed. Ladies start with a man who wants a home where you don't have to work because raising children is of the utmost importance. Men start with a woman that doesn't have her identity tied up in worldly achievements and is open to Godly submissiveness. Then as the person you want to have in your life develops in your mind, that image that honors God, He will bless you with that reality. You will even see that you care less about how they look, and you will begin to learn you are more concerned about what's on the inside. Pray it, have faith for God wants that for you, and work towards being ready for that day.

Getting marriage right family, whether you are single or have been married for decades, means to determine first and foremost that it exists to do God's bidding, not your own. The more you submit to that call, the more God's desires will become your own, for you will come to learn it is the best way.

[CALL TO OBEY]

Today I just want to give you some things to think about and so I modified this from a list created by Dr. Paul Tripp.

Dr. Paul Tripp - ["10 Things You Should Know about Marriage"](#)

Your Marriage will always require work.

Every marriage requires divine wisdom, divine strength, and divine grace that does not come from within your union. Every marriage requires absolute dependency on God AND the church! In other words, you won't fix your marriage by trying to fix yourself away from God and His people. Therefore, you need to practice seeking God together in scripture, you need the ongoing discipline of living with the church and protecting the sabbath, and you need to invite other like-minded Christians into your life, and that needs to be the priority!

Your Marriage exists in a fallen world.

The point is we all go into marriages with mistakes, sin, faulty assumptions about marriage life, inability to communicate, and undiscussed goals and desires. Then on top of that we live in a fallen world that adds to those faulty



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assumptions and declares you are right in seeing the marriage in how you think it should be. Reality - You have not arrived to spiritual enlightenment when you are married, as a matter of fact **God has planned most of your sanctification through your spouse**, using two fallen people in a fallen world, to make one image that will look like Christ. All marriages have to go through the crucible of pain and self-discovery to become what God has laid out for them. No one gets through it without some pain and disappointment.

Your Marriage cannot survive without confession of sin and forgiveness.

Confession is the doorway to change in your relationship. It is the realization to yourself and your spouse that no one gets it right, all have faulty thinking. Confession opens up pathways for sympathy and compassion that you thought were dried up. Forgiveness is the answer in light of all of that. It is the way you have to live, if you are going to live with a sinner, there is no other option. It is the only way to deal with disappointment and hurt, while it rebuilds trust. It works because forgiveness is not dependent on the spouse but on you and hopefully a good Gospel understanding you must offer it.

Family you are never alone in the struggle. God is always near for the same God that called you to marry a certain person, is also there in the union of it. It's about His name, and if you honor Him first, He desires to improve that marriage for it brings Him glory. He will always give you what you need, heed His words today.

MP:

**Flee from Sexual Immorality
by getting God's intent for marriage right.**

Family let us all support one another in this call to flee sexual immorality by making sure we get God's intent for marriage right. Now let's go to Him in prayer for He is the only one that can help us in this quest.

Prayer

Communion



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1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. The Lord lived a life like Paul, where He put away any desire to experience an earthly family. Instead, He embraced the call to be fruitful and multiply through making us Children of Faith, Abraham's heirs. By a life dedicated to glorifying God through that work of self sacrifice we are saved. Praise be to Him for His commitment to the Father!

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. Jesus paid the price for when we choose to neglect others and their needs. Not only have we not loved our spouses well, but we have not loved others in this world as we have loved ourselves. By His blood we are washed clean of this offense and by His redemption we are given the opportunities now to do that differently. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder - **"Christians, what do we believe?"** Congregation - recites:

London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 Chapter 25 Paragraph 2 Purposes of Marriage

Marriage was ordained for the husband and wife to help one another, ² for increasing the number of the human race with legitimate offspring, ³ and for preventing immorality. ⁴



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2. Genesis 2:18
3. Genesis 1:28
4. 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that provided the perfect groom for the church even when we did not deserve Him.

Go in the name of the Son, that loves us perfectly providing the spouses needed to obey the commands of dominion and multiplication.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that lives with us in our marriages, promoting confession and repentance, and stories of His great love to share with this world.



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